

# Upper Story Redevelopment: Strategies for Downtown Revitalization

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City of Cumberland

# Downtown Cumberland, MD

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- n Between 1870 and 1930
  - n Maryland's "Queen City"
  - n Diverse industrial base
  - n Transportation center
  - n Regional retail and service center

## n Post WWII Changes

- n Declining population
- n Aging population
- n Downtown decline
- n Suburban retail competition

# A Pedestrian Mall

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- n Four blocks of prime retail streets
- n Research concluded sales would increase by 8 %
- n Infrastructure and amenity features included
- n First indoor regional mall proposed
- n Without downtown pedestrian mall, sales would decline by 15%

# From 1976 Downtown Plan



Looking North along N. Center Street from Baltimore Street. This street would be pedestrianized, leaving one lane for delivery, pick-up and emergency vehicles.



Looking North along N. Liberty Street, with parklet on corner of Baltimore Street. This street would be pedestrianized, leaving one lane for delivery, pick-up and emergency vehicles.



Looking East along Baltimore Street. It is proposed that this street would be fully landscaped and redesigned as a pedestrian mall. Access will be provided for emergency vehicles.



Looking West along Baltimore Street. It is proposed that this street would be fully landscaped and redesigned as a pedestrian mall. Access will be provided for emergency vehicles.

# Recent Revitalization Efforts

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- n The 1980s showed major decline in occupancy, and loss of key stores
- n Cumberland adopted the Main Street Maryland approach, and active Downtown Managers
- n Downtown was made a locally zoned Historic District in the mid 1990s
- n Issue of removing the pedestrian mall was addressed, but a community survey said NO!!!

# The Baltimore Street Pedestrian Mall Today

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# Smart Growth and Upper Story Reuse

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- n With pedestrian mall in place for future...
- n With the use of exterior historic district project review, and tax credit programs...
- n With the creation of the state funded Canal Place Heritage Area adjacent to downtown...
- n Cumberland looks to reuse strategies

# Redefining Identity - Downtown



- n As a reflection of Cumberland's place in transportation history, the City is graced with an array of large, architecturally distinctive buildings
- n A decline in population and a shift in retail trends found many of these buildings, especially the upper floors, vacant or underutilized over the past two decades

# “Over the Store Housing”

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- n A 2000 study indicates there is a market for downtown housing
- n Also resident/studio spaces could be used—to enhance the “arts community” concept
- n “Immediate need for 64 units” of housing downtown
- n Funding gap: even with low property values, high renovation cost and low rents means a “gap”



# Live Where You Work

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- n The City of Cumberland's June 2000 market demand study, "Over the Store Housing" describes a **need for 64 residential units** within Downtown Cumberland

# Redefining Downtown

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- n The creation of residential and commercial space on the upper floors, as well as the designation as an Arts and Entertainment District, is transforming the downtown into an exciting place to live and to do business

# Redefining Downtown

- n Named as an **Arts & Entertainment District** by the State of Maryland, past marketing efforts have been directed at recruiting artists to Cumberland.
- n The floor plan of many downtown structures and availability of natural light make the spaces particularly attractive to artists.



# Reusing Existing Resources

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- n According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the greenest (structure) is the one that is already built.
  - n Structures constructed before 1920 are nearly as energy efficient as those built since 2000.
  - n Older structures were constructed to maximize their existence in the local environment

# Sustainable Elements of Existing Buildings

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Traditional builders accounted for the local environment including:

- n Siting of structure
- n Local materials
- n Natural ventilation
- n Shading
- n Reflective Roofing

# Community Legacy

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- n Community Legacy provides funds to Maryland communities with evidence of decline and disinvestment, but with potential to reverse the trend
- n Upper Story Revitalization was a priority in Community Legacy Funding applications for Cumberland
- n Creation of a “live where you work” environment is a smart growth goal

# Keys to Successful Projects

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## n Teamwork Approach

- n Initial contact is often made with Downtown Mall Managers
- n Early Consultation with City of Cumberland
  - n Fire Department
  - n Building and Zoning Officers
  - n Historic Preservation

# Benefits of Early Involvement

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- n Predevelopment Site Visit
  - n Team visit
  - n Assists Developer/Property Owner/Architect
  - n Helps to Develop Budget and Code Issues
  - n Provide Overview of Incentive Programs to Ensure Program Compliance



# Benefits to the Community

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- n Improves Life Safety
  - n Automatic Sprinklers
  - n Alarm Systems/Early Notification
- n Potentially Removes Blight/Property Maintenance Issues
- n Improves the Tax Base
- n Contributes to Revitalization Goals
- n Reuses existing resources...discourages sprawl

# Upper Story Program Accomplishments

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- n Seven applications for funding the first year, four funded
- n First year funding of \$150,000 generated at least \$947,480 of private investment
- n Participants were encouraged to utilize other programs in addition
- n Generated significant interest in downtown projects by in town and out of town investors

# Project Analysis

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- n To date, now 12 Community Legacy projects have created 5 upper story commercial spaces and 7 residential areas
- n Most residential projects “owner occupied”
- n Total downtown private investment to match Community Legacy funds is over \$3 million
- n Upper Story incentive programs have now ended, private projects continue

# Examples of Projects

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# 55 Baltimore Street

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- n First Floor – Retail
- n Second, Third and Fourth Floor – Single Family Residence and Artist Studio



#11  
55 Baltimore St. Cumberland  
Front street view AFTER

# 55 Baltimore Street



# 55 Baltimore Street





# 138 Baltimore Street

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- n The project has been built in phases
  - n Commercial Upper Story project in 2002-2003
  - n Residential Upper Story project on Fourth Floor completed in 2006
  - n Owner determined at initial phase what would be required and planned accordingly





# Exterior Before

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138-152  
Baltimore  
Street,  
Exterior Before



# After

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This project  
received  
\$50,000 in  
Community  
Legacy  
funding



# Upper Story Spaces

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Second  
story  
interior  
before



# Renovated Interior Space

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# 55 Baltimore Street

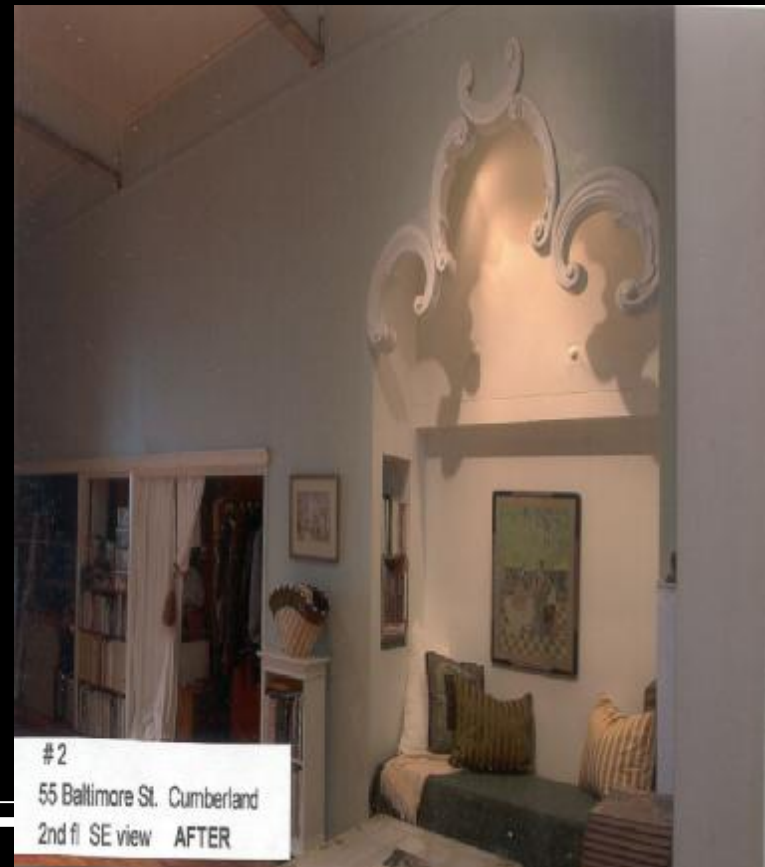
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# 55 Baltimore Street



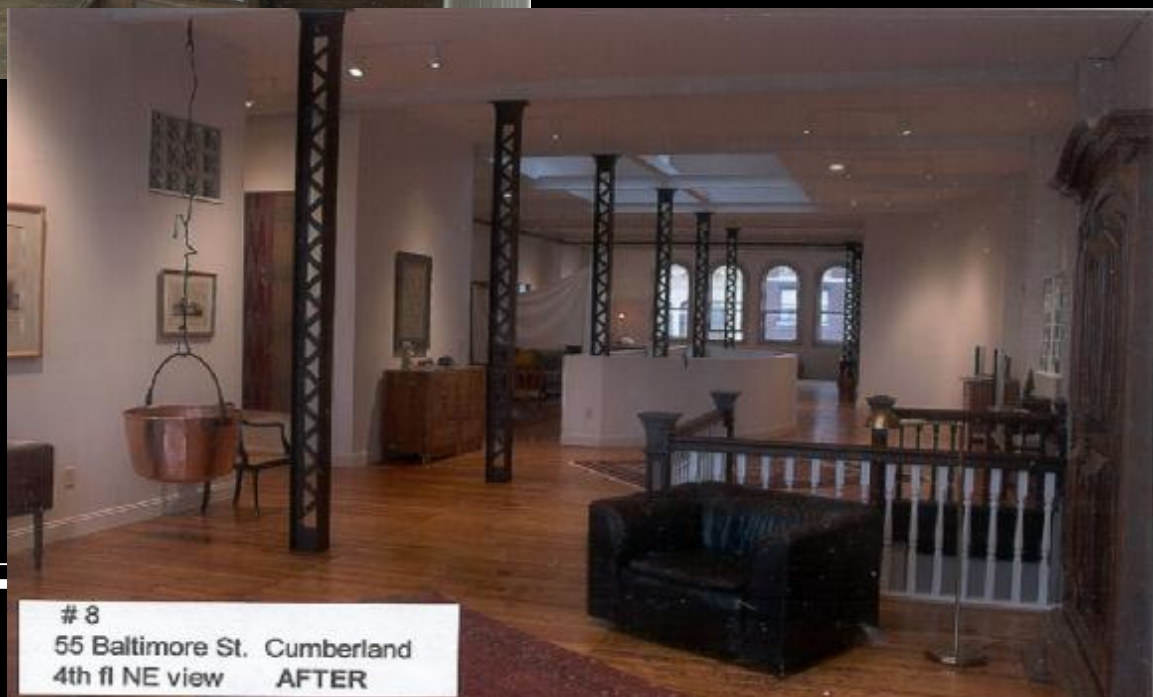
#2  
55 Baltimore St. Cumberland  
2nd fl SE view BEFORE



#2  
55 Baltimore St. Cumberland  
2nd fl SE view AFTER



# 8  
55 Baltimore St. Cumberland  
4th fl NE view **BEFORE**



# 8  
55 Baltimore St. Cumberland  
4th fl NE view **AFTER**

# 113-115 Baltimore Street

- n Mixed-Use  
(Retail/Office)
- n Joined Two Structures
- n Share Elevator and  
Stairs to help Address  
Accessibility and  
Egress Concerns





# 49 North Liberty Street

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- n Project was under construction and less than one month from completion when fire occurred in May 2006.
- n The cause of the fire was electrical in nature.



# 49 North Liberty Street

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- n When Fire Department arrived, they were able to charge the sprinkler system with water, even though it was not fully operational yet, and is credited for helping to save the structure and surrounding buildings



# 49 North Liberty Street

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- n Nearly one year after the fire, the building is nearly completed
- n Retail is planned for the first floor
- n Residential luxury apartments have been constructed in the three upper floors



# 49 North Liberty Street

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# Questions????

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## Contact Information:

Kathy McKenney

Historic Planner/Preservation Coordinator

City of Cumberland

PO Box 1702

Cumberland, MD 21502

301-759-6431

[kmckenney@allconet.org](mailto:kmckenney@allconet.org)

[www.ci.cumberland.md.us](http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us)